

Urban District Council
BURNHAM-ON-SEA



**MEDICAL OFFICER'S
ANNUAL REPORT
1945**



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Medical Officer's Annual Report

For 1945

To the Chairman and Members of the Burnham-on-Sea Urban District Council
Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting to you my second Annual Report, the thirty-first in the series of Medical Officer's Reports of the area.

During a disturbing and distracting year every endeavour has been made to keep the Public Health Services in the area at a high level of efficiency.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,
GEOFFREY B. EGERTON,
Medical Officer of Health.

Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area

Area=2,246 acres.

POPULATION:—

1931 Census	...	...	...	7,705
The Registrar General's Estimate for 1945	...	...	...	7,907

Rateable Value=£65,953.

Sum represented by a penny rate, £266 15s. 7d.

VITAL STATISTICS:—

LIVE BIRTHS	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	60	72	132
Illegitimate	11	9	20
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			152

STILL BIRTHS	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	—	1	1
Illegitimate	1	—	1
			<hr/>
			2

Birth Rate—19.2 per 1,000; this is higher than last year (18.2).

DEATHS	Male	Female	Total
	74	67	141

Death Rate—17.8 per 1,000; this is higher than last year (15.1).

INFANT MORTALITY (Deaths of Infants under one year of age).

	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	—	2	2
Illegitimate	1	—	1
			<hr/>
			3

THE FOLLOWING TABLE SHOWS THE CAUSES OF DEATH

All Causes				Male	Female
				74	67
Tuberculosis of Respiratory system	...	...	...	2	—
Other forms of Tuberculosis	...	...	...	—	1
Cancer of Buccal Cavity, Aesophagus & Uterus (F)				2	2
Cancer of Stomach and Intestines	...	...	...	7	4
Cancer of Breast	...	...	...	—	2
Cancer of all other sites	...	...	...	9	4
Diabetes	...	...	...	1	1
Intra-Cranial Vascular Lesions	...	...	...	3	12
Heart Disease	...	...	...	16	18
Other Diseases of the Circulatory System	...	...	...	1	2
Ulcer of the Stomach or Duodenum	...	...	...	2	—
Other Digestive Diseases	...	...	...	1	1
Bronchitis	...	...	...	4	—
Pneumonia	...	...	...	1	3
Other Diseases of the Respiratory System	...	...	...	2	—
Nephritis	...	...	...	3	1
Premature Birth	...	...	...	—	2
Influenza	...	...	...	1	1
Congenital Malformation, birth injuries	...	...	...	2	—
Road Traffic Accidents	...	...	...	1	2
Other Violent Causes	...	...	...	3	2
All other Causes	...	...	...	13	9

INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Several Smallpox Contacts, both Service personnel and civilians, arriving in the area of this authority, were kept under surveillance for the necessary period.

Evacuated children were medically examined in July before their return home; all were found to be fit and well, and free from Infectious or Contagious Disease.

The following table sets out particulars of Infectious Disease occurring in the area during the year:—

Disease	Total Cases Notified	Cases admitted to Isolation Hospital	Total Deaths
Tuberculosis—Respiratory	17	—	2
Non-Respiratory	6	—	1
Dysentery	1	1	—
Scarlet Fever	17	15	—
Measles	59	1	—
Whooping Cough	10	—	—
Acute Primary Pneumonia	5	1	4
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	1	—
Acute Polioencephalitis	1	1	1
Erysipelas	3	—	—

General Provision of Health Services for the Area

- I. Public Health Officers of the Authority :—
Medical Officer of Health—Dr. G. B. Egerton, M.C., M.B., B.S.
Surveyor—E. Dixon Grubb, A.M.I.C.E.
Sanitary Inspector—W. B. Graham, M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.
- II. (a) Laboratory facilities—as before.
(b) Ambulance facilities—The St. John Ambulance staffed by voluntary workers of the St. John Ambulance Brigade at Highbridge. Isolation Hospital Ambulance at Axbridge.
A Hospital Car Service is urgently required in the area to take sitting cases to and from Hospital, and so save using the Ambulance; this was recommended by the Ministry of Health on the winding up of the Voluntary Car Pool.
(c) Nursing—District Nurses in both Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge.
(d) Treatment Centre and Clinics—The minor ailments and Scabies Clinic in Abingdon Street was discontinued in June. Cases of Scabies are now sent to the Bridgwater Day Clinic.
The Infant Welfare Centres in both Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge continue to do good work and are greatly appreciated.

Diphtheria Immunisation

The Government's publicity effects were continued and accelerated. The Somerset County Council sent a postal reminder to the mother of each child, when the first birthday is getting near.

The number of children immunised in the area of this authority was:—

School Children	10.	Pre-School Children	78
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Housing

There were 340 applicants for Council Houses at the end of the year. One House was erected, and six were in course of erection, by Private Enterprise.

The programme of New Houses to be erected by the Council is 120 in the first year.

Existing Houses

There were 16 known cases of overcrowding, six of which have been remedied—including 2 sub-tenants of Council Houses, who have been accommodated in existing Council Houses which became vacant. No doubt the remaining cases will receive proper consideration by the Housing Committee, when vacancies occur.

To meet the demand, new houses, both private and State-aided schemes, are in progress. One Private House had been completed and occupied, two more have been roofed.

Several large houses have been, or are being, converted into flats.

The demand should be met as building works expedite with better weather conditions during the coming spring and summer.

Sanitary Work

1. **WATER SUPPLY.** The water supply was satisfactory in quality and quantity; the completion of the scheme started in 1939 is now being discussed.

All reports from the Public Analyst showed no evidence of contamination and the results were satisfactory.

All Houses within the Urban District boundaries have a main-piped water supply.

2. **MILK SUPPLY.** 19 samples were submitted for Tubercle examination, all were reported to be free from Tubercle Bacilli.

(a)	Total number of registered Dairy Farms	...	21
(b)	Number of Retailers	...	17
(c)	Number of Producer-Retailers included in (b)		7
(d)	Number of Licensed Pasteurising Plants	...	—
(e)	Number of Heat Treatment Plants not included in (d)	}	1

RIVER POLLUTION. There were no cases dealt with during the year. Attention was called by the Ministry of Health in a letter dated December 17th, 1945, to the estuary at Highbridge, and the Council were asked to consider alteration to the sewers, where they discharge into the river mouth.

Many complaints are received by the Medical Officer of Health and the Sanitary Inspector, which on investigation have no foundation; they are not nuisances according to the Public Health Acts, but some disturbance of the amenities enjoyed by the particular complainant. These investigations take up valuable time, which might be more usefully employed.

